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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0917

INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA PRIORITY 0127

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1070

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 000337

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR EAP, INR, T, IO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/30/2018

TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ETTC](#) [IR](#) [MY](#)

SUBJECT: ANWAR IBRAHIM CRITICIZES GOVERNMENT FOR EJECTING IRAN FROM ARMS SHOW

REF: A. KUALA LUMPUR 302 - IRAN BLOCKED AGAIN

- [1B.](#) STATE 41998 - ENDING U.S. PARTICIPATION
- [1C.](#) KUALA LUMPUR 286 - IRAN NOT STOPPED
- [1D.](#) KUALA LUMPUR 274 - MINDEF SAYS NO IRAN
- [1E.](#) KUALA LUMPUR 269 - IRAN AT ARMS SHOW
- [1F.](#) STATE 39049 - DEMARCHE INSTRUCTION

Classified By: Political Section Chief Mark D. Clark for reasons 1.4 (b and d).

[11.](#) (SBU) De facto opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim used a public speaking engagement on April 27 and his personal internet blog to criticize the Malaysian government for bowing to U.S. pressure and ejecting Iranian entities from the Defense Services Asia (DSA) military sales exhibition, held in Kuala Lumpur April 20-24 (reftels). Anwar told reporters on April 27 that "we strongly protest against (Deputy Prime Minister/Defense Minister) Najib's decision to deny Iran participation more so when they were invited here."

In his blog, Anwar referenced UN Security Council resolutions 1747 and 1803, but also wrote that, "(the DSA) exhibition is open to all sovereign nations, not for the purpose of selling weapons and other defense articles.... Malaysia as a sovereign and respected nation should have a non-aligned foreign policy and should not bow to directives from the U.S. or other powers." Some internet commentators speculated that Anwar's remarks on the issue represented an attempt to distance himself publicly from U.S. policy in order to undercut Malaysian government efforts to paint Anwar as a U.S. puppet.

[12.](#) (C) Polchief on April 30 spoke with Tian Chua, Information Chief for Anwar Ibrahim's Peoples Justice Party (PKR) and a close Anwar aide. Polchief drew Tian Chua's attention to paragraph 5 of UNSCR 1747 and its blanket prohibition on Iran's transfer and sales of arms and arms-related materiel, and highlighted the fact that even Iranian transfer of arms for the purpose of the DSA exhibition violated UN sanctions. Polchief emphasized that this was not a U.S. policy, but a decision by the international community, as represented by the United Nations. Tian Chua did not argue regarding the interpretation of the UNSCRs. He claimed that Anwar had intended to draw attention to the ineptitude of Malaysia's defense and foreign ministries, which had made a mistake by inviting Iran in the first place.

[13.](#) (C) Comment: Anwar did not get his facts straight on the DSA event and Iran's attempted participation, which included the display of small rockets, missiles and artillery shells.

Nevertheless, this did not prevent him from taking an opportunistic swipe at the Malaysian government at U.S. expense. Anwar's remarks on Iran's participation at the defense sales exhibition are reminiscent of attacks launched by the Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) against Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi. Abdullah, in a brief, one-time public comment in April 2007, called on Iran to respect UN resolutions regarding its nuclear program. At that time, PAS called Abdullah a U.S. "servant" for asking Iran "to kow-tow to the U.S. imposed UN Security Council (demands) to stop nuclear activities." PAS is an Islamist party and a key component in Anwar's opposition People's Alliance.

KEITH